

MAIL INTERCEPT

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

4 April 1975

The Honorable Bella S. Abzug, Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Government Information
and Individual Rights
Committee on Government Operations
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Abzug:

This is in reply to your letter of 24 March 1975 requesting further information concerning the Agency's foreign mail intercept program.

In my testimony before the Subcommittee on 5 March 1975, I several times stated that the mail intercept program which included your letters was terminated in 1973. I did not explain the circumstances of this event beyond that fact. A full review of the experience would indicate that [redacted] testimony with respect to this is essentially accurate. It would also reveal that, in our internal discussions within CIA in early 1973, I, as Executive Director, personally recommended the termination of that project. It thus stopped, as stated by [redacted] in February 1973. Later in 1973, after reviewing this and other activities, I issued specific instructions with respect to various questionable activities which had come to light as a result of Director Schlesinger's request of all employees for any such matters. In these directives, issued in August 1973, I specifically instructed that no United States mail be opened thenceforward. I thus believe my comment during the testimony before your Subcommittee was accurate.

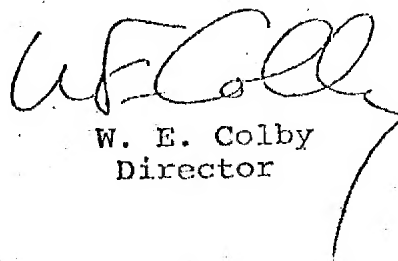
The mail intercept program was undertaken during the height of the Cold War for foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence purposes. Some Post Office and other U. S. Government officials knew of its existence, but there was no written agreement concerning the project.

As I have indicated, though [redacted] expressed his personal concern about the continuation of the program, there were no directives or instructions from Government authorities outside of CIA to terminate the activity.

- 2 -

The responses to the supplemental questions based on my testimony that you requested are being submitted to the Subcommittee staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "W. E. Colby". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "W" and a long, trailing flourish that extends downwards and to the right.

W. E. Colby
Director